



THE UNITED NATIONS ALLIANCE OF CIVILIZATIONS

Establishment: July 14, 2005

High Representative: H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser

Director: Matthew Hodes

Members: 108 States¹ and 22 International organizations²

Areas of Work: Youth, education, media and migration

Areas of Cooperation with the OAS:

Address: The Chrysler Building, 405 Lexington Avenue, 5th floor
New York, NY 10174, USA.

Phone: (212) 457-1751

Website: <http://www.unaoc.org/>

BACKGROUND

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) was established in 2005 as an initiative of the governments of Spain and Turkey under the auspices of the United Nations (UN) in order to advance and improve understanding and cooperation between nations of different cultures and religions (particularly Western and Muslim societies). Its four fields of action are youth, education, media and migration.

Its governing entities are the High Representative, the Alliance Secretariat, the UNAOC Group of Friends and the UNAOC Ambassadors. The latter are high-profile individuals appointed by the UN Secretary General mainly for promotional purposes. A twelve member informal advisory group counsels the High Representative.

¹ Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Belgium, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Republic of Congo, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea Bissau, Guyana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Latvia, Lebanon, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Montenegro, Morocco, Mozambique, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Timor-Leste, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vietnam and Yemen.

² African Union (AU), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), Council of Europe (CE), European Union (EU), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Organization of the Francophonie (OIF), League of Arab States (LAS), Organization of American States (OAS), Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Secretaría General Iberoamericana (SEGIB), Union Latina, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Cities and Local Government (UCLG) and The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO).

The UNAOC is supported by a Group of Friends consisting of around 90 UN Member States and organizations, including OAS itself and Member States Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, the United States of America and Uruguay

Upon its creation, the Alliance summoned a High-Level Group to examine the roots of polarization between societies and cultures today and to recommend appropriate action. The Report was released on November 13, 2006. The [First Implementation Plan](#) (2007-2009) addressed these recommendations and mandated a mid-term review after the first UNAOC Forum to assess progress.

The First Global Forum of the UNAOC, held in Madrid in 2008, focused on youth and convened over 500 delegates, leaders, activists and public figures from every region in the world. The Second Global Forum, held in Istanbul on April 6-7 2009 drew more than 1,500 participants.

OBJECTIVES

The UNAOC sees its role as a bridge-builder connecting people and organizations, a catalyst of innovative projects aimed at reducing polarization and a platform to increase visibility of these initiatives.

THE AOC STRATEGY

The United Nations Alliance of Civilizations works through biennial implementation plans since 2007. The Implementation Plans are prepared by the UNAOC High Representative and provide an overview on the defining principles of the UN Alliance of Civilizations. They outline the Programme of Action (ongoing projects and initiatives) and mechanism for partnership building, advocacy, financing and priority setting, reflecting the High Representative's vision of the way the Alliance should advance in its endeavors.

The High Representative presents yearly reports to the UN Secretary General who may transmit it to the UN General Assembly.

HIGH REPRESENTATIVE



On September 28, 2012, H.E. Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser was designated UN High Representative for the Alliance of Civilizations by the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Mr. Al-Nasser assumed the post on March 1, 2013 from UNAOC headquarters in New York.

Prior to that, Mr. Nassir Abdulaziz Al-Nasser assumed the Presidency of the Sixty-Sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly from September 13, 2011 to September 17, 2012. A veteran diplomat, Mr. Al-Nasser has the rank of Minister, granted by His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar.

For the past 13 years, from 1998 to 2011, Mr. Al-Nasser served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations. During this period, he played leading roles as Chairman of the General Assembly's Special Political and Decolonization (Fourth) Committee (2009 to 2010) and as President of the General Assembly High-level Committee on South-South Cooperation (2007 to 2009). He also chaired the Group of 77 and China at the United Nations in New York (2004), guiding action that paved the way for the Second South Summit of the Group, which took place in Doha, Qatar, the following year, and led to the establishment of the South Fund for Development and Humanitarian Affairs, a financing mechanism aimed at assisting the countries of the South in addressing issues such as poverty, hunger and natural disasters.

DIRECTOR



Matthew Hodes has spent most of the past twenty years in a variety of assignments related to the design and implementation of peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict nation building operations around the world as an international civil servant, not-for-profit leader and private consultant.

As Director of Programs at the Club de Madrid in 2010, Hodes directed activities for a NGO composed of former national leaders, with a focus on transformational leadership in transitional societies and equitable development policies. From 2001 to 2007, he served with the Conflict Resolution Program at The Carter Center, directing the Program from 2003-2007. He advised former President Carter on matters relating to armed conflicts and political disputes while leading Carter Center mediation or negotiation assistance activities in various countries around the world.

His UN service included experience at headquarters as well as the field in locations such as Somalia and the former Yugoslavia. During the Balkan wars of the 1990s he participated in cease-fire negotiations, fact-finding missions, and provided policy and legal advice. In 1995 he opened the first office in Sarajevo for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). Hodes served during 1999-2001 with the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia with a specific focus on coordinating the rebuilding of the Bosnian judicial system.

MEETINGS

The objective of the Group of Friends Meetings is to engage the community of countries and organizations into the work of the Alliance by enriching its initiatives and by providing ideas, insights and necessary support. It is also an opportunity for the Group of Friends members to report on their national and regional activities carried out under the Alliance's umbrella, as well as foster exchanges and cooperation among members. The Group of Friends Meetings are also an opportunity for the UNAOC High Representative to inform the community and consult on the execution of the UNAOC Implementation Plans (2007, 2009 and 2011) which serve as a guideline for the Alliance and establishes a range of projects and initiatives in order to reach its objectives.

The UNAOC convenes Meetings at the level of the Permanent Representatives of Missions and Heads of Delegations to the United Nations, and at the level of Ministers.

ANNUAL MEETINGS

The Annual Forum is the highest-profile event of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, bringing together prominent personalities, current and potential partners, and others from various sectors. Forums in the past have been held in Madrid, Spain (2008), Istanbul, Turkey (2009), Rio De Janeiro, Brazil (2010) and Doha, Qatar (2011). Preparation is currently under way for the Vienna Forum in February 2013.

COOPERATION WITH THE OAS

In September 11, 2009, the Department of International Affairs held the XVIII OAS Policy Roundtable “Learning to Live Together: Promoting Integration, Tolerance and Diversity in the Americas” in which Mr. Jorge Sampaio, former President of Portugal and High Representative of the UNAOC since 2007 was the keynote speaker. On that occasion, the High Representative extended an invitation to the OAS Secretary General to become a member of the Group of Friends.

On September 26, 2009, an OAS delegation led by OAS Secretary General Insulza attended a ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends in New York City as a guest. It was not until March 25, 2010 that the OAS became a member of the Group of Friends and attended the Third Global Forum of the Alliance *Bridging Cultures, Building Peace* held in Rio de Janeiro on 27-29 May 2010.

OAS Secretary General José Miguel Insulza spoke at this Forum stating that *“this very meeting right here, right now is an example of the need for new integration between peoples, but I believe we are still at the earliest stages of a very slow process. Between regions- even within regions; look at ours for example. In Latin America 1/3 of the population live in poverty and it’s mostly the indigenous peoples and the afro-descendants. Poverty has a face: the face of discrimination.*

We are experiencing a transition as I said, a very interesting process which results can’t be identified just yet.”

As national coordinators for the UNAOC, the Focal Points remain focused on National Plans and Regional Strategies for Intercultural Dialogue, as well as on ways to foster both their relevance and their broad national ownership. A delegation of the OAS participated in the First and Second Meetings of Latin American Focal Points held in Lima, Perú in 2010 and 2011 respectively, providing a regional perspective to the process of drafting a Latin American Strategy to work on implementing the tenets of the Alliance within our region.

A delegation from the OAS participated in the Group of Friends’ Meeting of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations held at United Nations (UN) Headquarters in New York City on March 20, 2012, as well as the Group of Friends’ Meeting on May 13, 2013. Also in May 2013 OAS officials met with the Director of the UNAOC in order to discuss areas for enhanced cooperation.

LATEST PUBLICATIONS

- [Implementation Plan covering 2011-2013](#)
- [Annual Report 2011](#)

SOURCES

[United Nations Alliance of Civilizations Official Website](#)

[OAS Department of International Affairs Website](#)

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